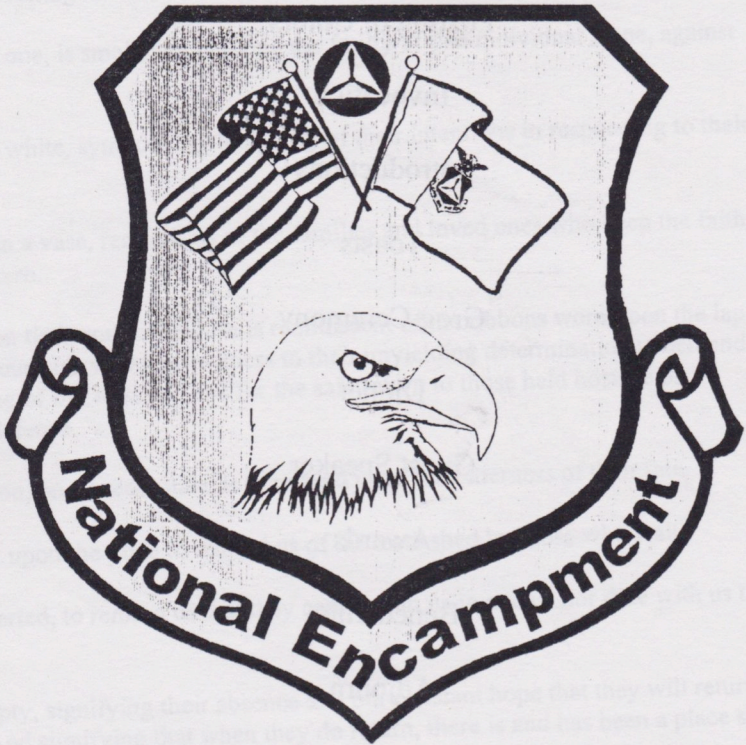


National Encampment ADG



July 1998

Sequence of Events

Social Hour

Chime Sound Assembly

President and Party Enter Mess

Posting of Colors

Invocation

Introductions

Toasts

Grog Ceremony

Dinner

Guest Speaker

Awards

Benediction

Adjourn

Guest Speaker

General Joseph W. Ralston is the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Pentagon, Washington, D.C. In this capacity, he is a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the nation's second highest ranking military officer. As the vice chairman, General Ralston serves as the chairman of the Joint Requirements Oversight Council; vice chairman of the Defense Acquisition Board; as a member of the National Security Council Deputies Committee and the Nuclear Weapons Council. In addition, he acts for the chairman in all aspects of the planning, programming and budgeting system to include participating in meetings of the Defense Resources Board.

General Ralston entered the Air Force in 1965 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program. His career includes operational command at squadron, wing, numbered air force and major command, as well as a variety of influential staff and management positions at every level of the Air Force. He has been closely involved with building the U.S. Air Force of the 21st century, holding a variety of positions related to the requirements and acquisition process. Prior to assuming his current position, he was commander of Air Combat Command with headquarters at Langley Air Force Base, Va. He is a command pilot with more than 2,500 flying hours, including 147 combat missions over Laos and North Vietnam.

General Ralston and his wife, the former Diane "Dede" Dougherty, have four children: Christopher, Paige, David and Sarah



Rules of the Mess

1. Thou shalt arrive within ten minutes of the appointed hour.
2. Thou shalt make every effort to meet all guest.
3. Thou shalt move to the mess when thee hears the chimes and remain standing until standing until seated by the President
4. Thou shalt participate in all toasts unless thyself or thy group is honored with a toast.
5. Thou shalt not leave the mess whilst convened. Military protocol overrides all calls of nature
6. Thou shalt ensure thy glass is always charged when toasting
7. Thou shalt keep toasts and comments within the limits of good taste and mutual respect. Degrading or insulting remarks will be frowned upon by the membership; however, a good natured needling is ENCOURAGED
8. Thou shalt not murder the Queen's English.
9. Thou shalt not open the hangar doors.
10. Thou shalt always use the proper toasting procedures
11. Thou shalt fall into disrepute with thy peers if thy uniform is not properly worn
12. Thou shalt also be painfully regarded if thy gig line resides at an obvious list. Thou shalt be forgiven, however, if thee also rides at a comparable list.
13. Thou shalt consume the meal in a manner becoming gentle persons
14. Thou shalt not laugh at ridiculously funny comments unless the President first shows approval by laughing
15. Thou shalt express approval by tapping thy spoon on the table. Clapping of thy hands is only appropriate after the guest speaker finishes his/her talk.
16. Thou shalt not question the decisions of the President
17. When the mess adjourns, thou shalt rise and wait for the President and guest to leave
18. Thou shalt enjoy thyself to the fullest

Awards

Honor Leadership Cadet

Honor Flight

Honor Officer

Honor NCO

Honor Cadet

Menu

Chicken/Beef Buffet

Origin of the Dining Out

Formal military dinners are a tradition in all branches of the United States armed services. In the Air Force and the Navy, it is the Dining Out; in the Army, the regiment dinner, in the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard, Mess Night.

As with most tradition, the origin of the Dining Out is not clear. Formal dinners are rooted in antiquity. From pre-Christ Roman legions, to second century, feast to honor military victories and individual and unit achievements have been a custom.

Some trace the origins of the Dining Out to the old English monasteries. The custom was then taken up by the early universities and eventually adopted by the military with the advent of the officers' mess. With the adoption of the Dining Out by the military, these dinners became more formalized. British soldiers brought the custom to colonial America, where it was borrowed by George Washington's continental army.

The Air Force Dining Out probably began in the 1930s with the late General H.H. "Hap" Arnold's wing dings. The close bonds enjoyed the Air Corps officers and their British colleagues of the Royal Air Force during World War II surely added to the American involvement in the Dining-Out custom.

The Dining-Out has served the Air Force as well as an occasion for military people to meet socially at a formal military function. It enhanced the spirit of units and enables individuals of all ranks to create bonds of friendship and better working relations though an atmosphere of good fellowship.

The Dining Out has a rich tradition, and that tradition lives today.

Missing Comrades Table

Ladies and Gentlemen, you may have noticed the small table, set for a single dinner, off to one side. Please, let me tell you about it. The military and many other organizations are filled with symbolism. This table is our way of symbolizing the fact that some members of our profession are missing from our midst. The missing brothers and sisters may be absent because they are serving our country at home or abroad, Prisoners of War, Missing in Action, or being held as hostages, or because they made the ultimate sacrifice to help keep us free. Regardless of the reason, they are unable to be here with us this evening and so we remember them and their circumstances.

This table, set for one, is small, symbolizing the frailty of one individual alone, against his oppressors.

The table cloth is white, symbolizing the purity of their intentions in responding to their country's call.

The single rose, in a vase, reminds us of the families and loved ones who keep the faith, awaiting their return.

The yellow ribbon tied around the vase is reminiscent of the ribbons worn upon the lapel and breasts of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting of our missing, and for the safe return to those held hostage or engaged in our defense.

The slice of lemon, on a bread plate, is to remind us of the bitterness of their fate.

And there is salt upon the plate to remind us of the tears shed by those who wait.

The glass is inverted, to remind us that they cannot join us in a toast nor dine with us this evening.

The chair is empty, signifying their absence and our constant hope that they will return to us some day. And signifying that when they do return, there is and has been a place set aside for them in our hearts and minds.

Will you please stand and bow your head in a moment of silence in remembrance of our comrades.

Please join me in a toast; "In remembrance of our absent Brothers and Sisters."

The U.S. Air Force Song

Off we go into the wild blue yonder,
Climbing high into the sun
Here they come, zooming to meet our thunder,
At 'em boys, give 'er the gun.
Down we drive, spouting our flame from under,
Off with one, hell of a roar.
We live in fame, or go down in flame,
Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!

Minds of men fashioned a crate of thunder
Sent it high into the blue
Hands of men blasted the world asunder
How they lived God only knew
Souls of men dreaming of skies to conquest
Gave us wings ever to soar.
With scouts before and bombers galore.
Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!

Here's a toast to the host of those who
Love the vastness of the sky.
To a friend we send the message of his brother men who fly.
We drink to those, who gave their all of old.
Then down we roar to score the rainbow's pot of gold.
A toast to the Host of men we boast.